

breaking point. Readiness is suffering due to an overcommitment and underresourcing. We have just added Kosovo to the many locations around the world where the United States forces will be semi-permanently assigned to a major new mission, like policing the border. Redirecting many military personnel to nonmilitary missions would increase the negative impact on military readiness.

Under U.S. law, law enforcement is historically and properly left to the Department of Justice and its agencies, as it should be. The United States military is precluded from becoming a police force, under the posse comitatus act. We ought not to change the basic principle.

We have had many discussions about this, and I compliment the gentleman's tenacity over the years in bringing this amendment. But if it is the border the gentleman wants to strengthen, we can do that through other proper agencies and not through the use of a military force.

At a time when this Nation has embraced the North American Free Trade Agreement and we want to have even better relations with Mexico and Canada, putting a military force on the border itself sends a very awful message to our friend to the south.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY).

Mr. BILBRAY. Madam Chairman, I ask my colleagues to think, instead of feel. I know they are worried about a negative message being sent. But let me say to my colleague that Mexico places their troops along the border because they recognize that the battle against drugs is going to have to be fought on the border.

The concept of political correctness, of what might look bad is unimportant to Mexico. They know how desperate the situation is. They put their troops where the problem exists. We send our troops all over the world. We are ready to send another 7,000 to Kosovo to protect other neighborhoods and other borders.

What about the American neighborhoods that are being poisoned by drugs today? Is it too much to ask that the American taxpayer who pays for these troops, be allowed to be protected from drugs by these troops?

Madam Chairman, I want to point out, almost every State along the border has committed its National Guard to helping along the border at addressing this crisis. Is it too much to say, with good training and appropriate supervision, that the United States Federal Government will make its contribution, too, in every way possible?

Please, common sense says we should be doing as much for our American citizens as we are doing for people all over the world.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES).

#### PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. REYES. Madam Chairman, parliamentary inquiry. There are a number of Members that would like a unanimous consent to be in opposition to the amendment.

Do I yield time, or does it count against my 1½ minutes? What is the procedure? Obviously, we do not have enough time to have everybody speak.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 1½ minutes, during which time he may yield to anyone he wishes within the 1½ minutes that he has been yielded.

Mr. REYES. It will count against my time?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. That is correct. The gentleman is recognized for 1½ minutes.

Mr. REYES. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Madam Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Traficant amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the Amendment by the gentleman from Ohio.

I do want to commend my colleague from Ohio for his dedication and tenacity in fighting drugs. Every member of this body, I am sure, shares his commitment to ending this scourge on our society. But, while we share the same goals, we do have a difference in opinion on how to eradicate drug smuggling and drug abuse.

The District I represent sits on the Mexican border. One of the crossings in my District is the busiest border crossing in the entire world! So, I have personal experience with the border and all the opportunities and challenges associated with border crossings.

There is no question that we must gain better control of our borders. There have been Herculean efforts by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Customs Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and many other government agencies, including state and local agencies. All these agencies are to be commended for their efforts and dedication to controlling our borders and ending the illegal crossing of narcotics and narcotics smugglers.

And, though much remains to be done, I have serious and grave reservations about this proposal to literally arm the border. Yes, we need to better control the border, but placing armed military personnel on our borders, who are trained to fight and win wars by killing people, is not the answer.

The United States military is the best equipped, best trained, most disciplined, and most efficient in the world. Our military can win any war that the American people choose to fight. But, the brave men and women serving in our Armed Forces win those wars by killing people. As repulsive and unforgiving as killing is, it is the way wars are won. With people who are trained to kill other people patrolling our own border, I fear for the safety of our own citizens—not from intent, but from accident.

I also want to remind everyone that Mexico is a friendly country. They have made no at-

tempts at invasion since the Alamo. Accordingly, I believe this proposal could do serious damage to a relationship that is fragile, at best.

Mr. Chairman, we must find new and innovative methods for stopping illegal drugs from coming into our country and killing our people. But I do not believe arming the Mexican-American border with the United States military is the best way. I call on my colleagues to not limit themselves to old and easy ideas for ending this scourge of deadly drugs. Let us think beyond the conventional solutions of greater force and move toward new proposals.

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Mr. REYES. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ).

(Mr. ORTIZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Chairman, I oppose the amendment. I think that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) has made some good points about terrorism, but this is something that Immigration and Customs can do. I rise in opposition to the amendment at this time.

Mr. REYES. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I have a tremendous amount of respect for both the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) and those Members of Congress that are frustrated about the specter of terrorism, drugs, and all of these other things. But these are the facts: 90 percent of the drugs enter through our ports of entry. As the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) mentioned, only three of out of every 100 trucks are inspected.

Currently there are only 8,000 Border Patrol agents to cover our border. We need 20,000 to do the job. \$1.9 million was paid out in a settlement to the Ezequiel Hernandez family as he was shot by a military patrol in Texas on the border.

The needs of the border are this: We need to understand and have a common-sense approach from this Congress. We need more Border Patrol agents. We need more Customs inspectors. We need more INS inspectors. We also need to support the technology that will make us effective in inspecting those trucks at the ports of entry.

The consequences I see are, are we moving towards marshal law, not just for border communities, but throughout the country? Are we going to have armed personnel from the United States military in our neighborhoods, not just on the border, but throughout the country? Are we going to have another Ezequiel Hernandez incident?

This has a tremendous impact, not only on border communities, but on this country and a tremendous impact on the readiness and our ability to deploy our troops and expect the best from our armed forces.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.